

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team on **08081 434 434**

HS2 Update

Ecology | April 2020

High Speed Two (HS2) is the new high speed railway for Britain. In response to the covid-19 virus we have worked hard to ensure that our working practices are fully aligned with the Site Operating Procedures produced by the Construction Leadership Council. These procedures have been endorsed by Public Health England. We will be keeping our local website www.hs2inbucksandox.co.uk up to date with information on our works, and the measures we have in place to maintain the safety of the community and our workforce.



What are we doing?

We have built a number of new habitat sites along the HS2 route that will be populated not just by protected species, but also by a naturally diverse range of plants and animals.

Some of the key features that have been put in place include:

- Wildlife ponds with aquatic planting
- Hibernaculas – places where reptiles can go in the winter
- Bat boxes
- Reptile basking banks
- Planting of wetland and dry grassland
- Planting of Alder and Black Poplar trees

We will be shortly begin moving species to their new habitats.

Before we can do this, we have a range of work we need to do to first.

Our works will be starting during April and will continue until November 2020.

Installation of newt fencing

Newt fencing consists mainly of plastic membrane which is buried into the ground and supported by stakes. This is to prevent newts entering the work area, and to collect the newts.

Collected newts are then taken to an ecology approved mitigation site that has been prepared for them and is suitable to support the population of newts (i.e. suitable aquatic vegetation and bankside vegetation).

Vegetation works

The works are due to start during April and will continue until November 2020.

Working hours:

Monday to Friday
8.00am – 6.00pm

Our contractors may be on site for one hour's start-up and shutdown either side of these times

The temporary traffic lights will be in place during off peak hours only. These hours will be from 9.30am – 3.30pm.

Respond promptly to any complaints and take appropriate action.

Take care to respect your community



Future works

Newt trapping

We will move the newts from an area scheduled for future works to a new habitat site. Ecologists use pit fall traps and mats which are set along the line of the fencing (please see images below).

When the newts move from the breeding pond, they move towards the line of the fence until they either fall into the trap or hide under a mat. All traps are checked daily by experienced ecologists who are accredited under the HS2 Great Crested Newt Licence.



Vegetation clearance

All clearance works are undertaken under the instructions of the ecologist on site, who decides the appropriate methods of clearance based on the vegetation present. This involves a detailed hand search to determine if any ecology is present, if it is found that the area is clear then the vegetation clearance will be allowed to take place. A small workforce will use machinery and hand-held equipment to clear sections of hedgerows and trees. Vegetation, trees and hedges will be cut down to 150 millimetres above ground.

Maintenance of cleared vegetation

Areas that have been cleared will be maintained in a condition that makes it unsuitable for newts. The area will be checked by an ecologist and any suitable hibernation or vegetation that may provide habitat for newts will be hand searched and then strimmed down to 150 millimetres.

A second cut should will be undertaken on the following day, after a recheck of the area by the ecologist. The second cut should take the vegetation down to 50 millimetres above ground level, the vegetation will then be maintained at this height to discourage newts from entering the area.

Existing pond removal

Once newts have been moved to their new habitat, all vegetation is to be removed from the existing pond before any clearance works start. The pond will be drained using a pump with suitable filters to prevent any newts being drained with the water. This work will all be carried out under the supervision of an ecologist. A fingertip search for newts will be undertaken and once it is confirmed that there are no newts present, the pond will then be filled in.

Traffic management

Whilst we are carrying out any vegetation clearance that is near to the public highway we will complete the works using temporary traffic lights.

This is to manage the traffic for the safety of road users and personnel involved in the works. We will provide updates to the locations and duration of any traffic management to the local Parish Council and on www.hs2inbucksandox.co.uk.

Red areas indicate where we will be carrying out the works



Keeping you informed

We are committed to keeping you informed about work on HS2. This includes ensuring you know what to expect and when to expect it, as well as how we can help.

Residents' Charter and Commissioner

The Residents' Charter is our promise to communicate as clearly as we possibly can with people who live along or near the HS2 route.

www.gov.uk/government/publications/hs2-residents-charter

We also have an independent Residents' Commissioner whose job is to make sure we keep to the promises we make in the Charter and to keep it under constant review. Find reports at:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-ltd-residents-commissioner

You can contact the Commissioner at: residentscommissioner@hs2.org.uk

Construction Commissioner

The Construction Commissioner's role is to mediate and monitor the way in which HS2 Ltd manages and responds to construction complaints. You can contact the Construction Commissioner by emailing: complaints@hs2-cc.org.uk

Property and compensation

You can find out all about HS2 and properties along the line of route by visiting:

www.gov.uk/government/collections/hs2-property

Find out if you're eligible for compensation at:

www.gov.uk/claim-compensation-if-affected-by-hs2

Holding us to account

If you are unhappy for any reason you can make a complaint by contacting our HS2 Helpdesk team. For more details on our complaints process, please visit our website:

www.hs2.org.uk/how-to-complain

Contact Us

Contact our HS2 Helpdesk team all day, every day of the year on:

 Freephone **08081 434 434**

 Minicom **08081 456 472**

 Email **HS2enquiries@hs2.org.uk**

Write to:

FREEPOST

HS2 Community Engagement

Website **www.hs2.org.uk**

To keep up to date with what is happening in your local area, visit: **www.HS2inyourarea.co.uk**

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